



# LISKA ASSOCIATES

Governmental Advocacy for Non-Profits

April 20, 2005

ATTN. COMMITTEE CLERK, Dave Mead

RE: HB4465

State Rep. Tom Casperson, Chairman  
and Members

House Conservation, Forestry & Outdoor Recreation Committee  
Michigan House of Representatives  
1487 South, House Office Building  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairman and Members:

On behalf of my client, The Michigan Humane Society (MHS), and its thousands of members across our state (including thousands of hunters), I wish to advise you of the MHS's support for Rep. Glenn Steil, Jr.'s HOUSE BILL 4465, to ban internet hunting in Michigan. We commend Rep. Steil, Jr. for taking the initiative to address this issue so quickly.

For purposes of context, let me state that the MHS is a 127-year old, mainstream animal protection organization which primarily focuses upon its central mission to shelter and aid companion animals. It is NOT an anti-hunting, animal liberation organization (despite being portrayed as such on occasion by political adversaries).

Ethical hunters, non-hunters, and even anti-hunters can find an area of common agreement in this legislation. Internet hunting is not hunting in the proper sense of the term and activity: it is simply killing. In discussing this bill just yesterday with one of our members who is a fourth generation Michigan Bow & Arrow deer hunter (as well as a person who works in the computer software industry), he made the statement to me that because of computer lag time, it would be nearly impossible for anyone to get a clean shot at an animal by this method. He, like all ethical hunters, is sickened by internet hunting, and believes that such an activity would do more harm to the image of hunting and hunters than anything zealous anti-hunters could do.

You may be interested to know that in addition to pending federal legislation to outlaw this practice, bills are also underway in the States of Alabama, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Virginia just signed a bill into law.

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The MHS is respectfully asking for your and Rep. Steil's consideration of two amendments that would substantially strengthen and improve HB4465:

1) Since it is (thankfully) virtually impossible to police what a person does in the privacy of their home when they are on their computer, an incentive is needed to show possible violators that if they do this and risk being caught, they will be subject to a penalty strong enough to act as a deterrent. Thus, we propose using penalties similar to those in the internet hunting ban law recently enacted by the State of Virginia:

"Any person who is convicted of violating this act is guilty of a 93-day misdemeanor, and shall be subject to the following penalties: 1) revocation of all current hunting licenses for a period of not less than three nor more than five years; and 2) a fine of not less than \$2,500.00."

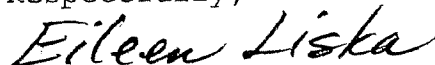
2) Also use language similar to that in the pending California bill which closes a major loophole as follows:

"It is unlawful for any person to establish or operate a computer-assisted remote hunting site in Michigan for the purpose of permitting the taking of any bird or mammal."  
(Note: make sure to add a definition of "person" in the bill so it is defined broadly to include both individuals, corporations, partnerships, etc.).

These minimal, but significant, amendments would make HB4465 a more effective, and enforceable, law.

I have copies of the new Virginia law as well as some of the bills pending in various states, should you wish to see them. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about our comments. Thank you very much for your consideration of our views.

Respectfully,



Eileen M. Liska  
Legislative Advocate  
Michigan Humane Society

cc: Rep. Glenn Steil, Jr.  
Cal Morgan, MHS Ex.Dir.